

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T TEL AVIV 6711

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, IS, US, EG

SUBJ: DAYAN TELLS KNESSET OF RECEIPT OF U.S. "DOCUMENT"

REF: TEL AVIV 6541

1. FOREIGN MINISTER MOSHE DAYAN, RESPONDING TO A SHARP ATTACK BY OPPOSITION LEADER PERES ON THE GOI'S PEACE PROPOSALS AND NEGOTIATING STRATEGY, ANNOUNCED IN THE KNESSET TODAY (MAY 24) THAT I HAD DELIVERED A "DOCUMENT" TO HIM ON MAY 19. INCLUDED IN THAT DOCUMENT, ACCORDING TO DAYAN, WERE THE QUESTIONS WHICH HAD FIRST BEEN POSED BY THE ADMINISTRATION TO DAYAN IN WASHINGTON, AS WELL AS QUESTIONS WHICH HAD BEEN SUBMITTED TO EGYPT THROUGH THE U.S. "WE HAVE RECEIVED ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS," SAID DAYAN, ADDING THAT THE ENTIRE "DOCUMENT" WOULD BE DISCUSSED IN NEXT WEEK'S CABINET SESSION.

2. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, DAYAN STATED THAT IF THE US WAS NOT PRESSING ISRAEL FOR A REPLY TO THE ADMINISTRATION'S TWO QUESTIONS, IT WAS AT LEAST PARTIALLY DUE TO THE UNACCEPTABLE NATURE OF THE "EGYPTIAN REPLY", WHICH THE AMERICANS FELT IT WAS NECESSARY TO HAND BACK TO CAIRO. TO ROUND OUT AN ADDRESS WHICH WAS LESS THAN REPLETE WITH GLAD TIDINGS, DAYAN STATED THAT SADAT WAS NOT WILLING TO INCLUDE THE LANGUAGE OF THE ASWAN FORMULA

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IN THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES (WHICH DUE TO INTER-ARAB DYNAMICS, HE SAID, MUST BE AN EXTREME DOCUMENT), NOR WAS SADAT PREPARED TO SIGN A SEPARATE PEACE AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL.

3. I AM SOMEWHAT MYSTIFIED BY THIS RATHER CARELESS RENDITION OF MY MAY 19 MEETING WITH DAYAN (REFTEL). I WOULD LIKE TO RESERVE JUDGEMENT UNTIL I RECEIVE AN OFFICIAL TEXT OF THE KNESSET

STATEMENT TOMORROW. ON THE BASIS OF A TRANSLATION BY OUR SENIOR LOCAL POLITICAL ANALYST, WHO ATTENDED THE KNESSET SESSION, IT IS CLEAR THAT DAYAN, TRUE TO FORM, WAS ELLIPTICAL ALMOST TO THE POINT OF UNINTELLIGIBILITY. THUS, IT IS NOT CLEAR IF DAYAN SAID, OR MEANT TO SAY, THAT HE HAD RECEIVED ANSWERS FROM THE EGYPTIANS TO QUESTIONS THAT THE GOI HAD PASSED ON THROUGH US. JOURNALISTS WHO WERE PRESENT INSIST THAT HE MADE SUCH A STATEMENT. A CLOSE EXEGESIS OF OUR ANALYST'S RECONSTRUCTION INDICATES THAT THIS WAS IMPLIED BUT NOT EXPLICITY STATED.

4. DAYAN'S REFERENCE TO A "DOCUMENT" CAN NOT BE ATTRIBUTED TO OUR MISCODING OF DAYAN FUSCATION. USE OF THE TERM "DOCUMENT" HAS BEEN CONFIRMED IN RADIO REPORTS ON TODAY'S KNESSET PROCEEDINGS. MY FIRST IMPULSE -- A CHARITABLE ONE -- IS TO ASSUME THAT THIS WAS NO MORE THAN A CONFUSED ATTEMPT TO RESPOND TO PERES' SPIRITED ATTACK, IN WHICH THE VERBAL CHARACTER OF OUR EXCHANGE LAST FRIDAY ASSUMED, IN DAYAN'S MEMORY, A WRITTEN FORM. INDEED, DAYAN, HAS MADE SLIPS OF THIS KIND IN THE PAST. IN ANY CASE, A LOOK AT THE OFFICIAL ENGLISH TEXT TOMORROW SHOULD INDICATE WHETHER SUCH A GENEROUS READING IS JUSTIFIED.

5. WHATEVER DAYAN'S PURPOSES, THE LIKELY INTERPRETATION BY MANY HERE WILL BE THAT THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THE CABINET WILL RESPOND POSITIVELY TO OUR QUERIES. ANOTHER HYPOTHESIS IS SUGGESTED BY A REPORT FROM ONE WELL-INFORMED JOURNALIST. HE INSISTS THAT DAYAN AND YADIN HAVE NOW AGREED TO HAVE A SHOWDOWN

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WITH BEGIN OVER THE NEED TO MODIFY THE ISRAELI POSITION ON THE WEST BANK, AND THAT A CABINET CRISIS COULD OCCUR IF THEY LOSE. WERE THIS HIS GAME PLAN, DAYAN'S STATEMENT TODAY COULD HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO LULL THE BEGIN FORCES INTO A SENSE OF FALSE SECURITY UNTIL IT IS TIME FOR THE ISSUE TO BE JOINED. THIS MAY SOUND FAR-FETCHED, BUT WOULD NOT BE UNTHINKABLE FOR THE WILY FOREIGN MINISTER.

LEWIS

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